

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 256159

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ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CCO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/ARN:DAKORN:BDF

APPROVED BY P:JJSISCO

S/S - JMEALUM

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 256159

EXDIS TOSEC 182

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE, US

SUBJECT: US-LEBANESE RELATIONS

FOR SECRETARY FROM SISCO

1. AFTER RECEIVING YOUR AMENDMENTS ON PRESS GUIDANCE ON FRANGIE'S VISIT TO NEW YORK, I CALLED LEBANESE AMBASSADOR KABBANI MID-MORNING NOVEMBER 20 TO CHECK IT OUT WITH HIM. BEFORE TAKING UP GUIDANCE, I STRESSED THAT I WAS SPEAKING WITHOUT INSTRUCTIONS AND ON PERSONAL AND UNOFFICIAL BASIS BUT WANTED TO POINT OUT THAT ON OUR SIDE WE HAD SENT LETTER FROM YOU TO TAQLA AND MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT TO FRANGIE AND IT WAS HARD TO SEE WHAT MORE WE COULD BE EXPECTED TO DO. I STRESSED THAT I ONLY WANTED KABBANI TO KNOW AS A FRIEND OF MY CONCERN THAT LEBANESE NOT ALLOW MATTERS TO GET OUT OF HAND, AND THAT WE HAD DONE EVERYTHING POSSIBLE THAT COULD BE REASONABLY EXPECTED OF US.

2. RE PRESS GUIDANCE, I SAID THAT SINCE PROBLEM HAS GOTTEN INTO BEIRUT PRESS, WE HAVE TO BE READY FOR QUESTIONS BY AMERICAN MEDIA. I MADE CLEAR THAT WE HAVE NO INTENTION OF BUILDING UP PUBLICITY AND THAT ON CONTRARY WE WANT TO PLAY SECRET

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IT DOWN AND SAY ONLY MINIMUM NECESSARY. I ASSURED KABBANI

THAT WE WOULD NOT VOLUNTEER ANYTHING, WOULD USE PROPOSED GUIDANCE ONLY IF ASKED AND THAT STRICT INSTRUCTIONS WOULD BE GIVEN TO DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN NOT TO SAY ANYTHING BEYOND IT. AFTER GIVING LANGUAGE IN OUR GUIDANCE TO KABBANI, I ASKED HIM TO CHECK IT WITH BEIRUT AND SAID WE WOULD WELCOME ANY THOUGHTS HE OR GOL WOULD LIKE TO GIVE US BEFORE NOON PRESS BRIEFING. KABBANI SAID PROPOSED GUIDANCE SEEMED TO HIM RIGHT WAY TO HANDLE PRESS INQUIRIES. HE ADDED THAT HE WAS SURE THAT FRANGIE, TAQLA AND OTHER SENIOR GOL OFFICIALS WERE NOT SOURCE OF PRESS STORIES AND POINTED OUT GOL UNABLE CONTROL LEBANESE PRESS.

3. AMBASSADOR KABBANI CALLED MR. SISCO SUBSEQUENTLY AND INFORMED HIM THAT HE HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WITH FOREIGN MINISTER TAQLA WHO HAD NO OBJECTION TO OUR PRESS LINE ON AN IF ASKED BASIS.

4. APPROVED PRESS STATEMENT WAS MADE HERE AT NOON PRESS BRIEFING. INGERSOLL

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